

sooth; have thow the yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn impacience. Of pacience comth obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist. And understond wel that obedience is perfit, whan that a man dooth gladly and hastily, with good herte entierly, al that he sholde do. Obedience generally, is to perfourne the doctrine of God and of his sovereyns, to whiche hym oghte to ben obeisaunt in alle rightwisnesse.

Sequitur de Accidia.

AFTER the synnes of envye and of ire, now wol I speken of the synne of accidie. for envye blyndeth the herte of a man, & ire troubleth a man; & accidie maketh hym bevy, thoghtful & wrawful. Envye & ire maken bitternesse in herte; which bitternesse is mooder of accidie, and bynymeth hym the love of alle goodnesse. Thanne is accidie the angwissh of a trouble herte; and Seint Augustyn seith: It is anoy of goodnesse and joye of harm. Certes, this is a dampnable synne; for it dooth wrong to Jhesu Crist, inasmuche as it bynymeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist with alle diligence, as seith Salomon. But accidie dooth no swich diligence; he dooth alle thyng with anoy, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusacioun, and with ydelnesse, & unlust; for which the book seith: Accursed be he that dooth the service of God negligently.

THANNE is accidie enemy to everich estaat of man; for certes, the estaat of man is in thre maneres. Outher it is thestaat of innocence, as was thestaat of Adam biforn that he fil into synne; in which estaat he was holden to wirche as in herynge & adowrynge of God. Another estaat is the estaat of synful men, in which estaat men been holden to labour in preyinge to God for amendement of hire synnes, and that he wole graunte hem to aysen out of hir synnes. Another estaat is thestaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence; & certes, to alle thise thynges is accidie enemy & contrarie. for he loveth no bisynesse at al. Now certes, this foule synne, accidie, is eek a ful greet enemy to the lifode of the body; for it ne hath no purveance agayn temporeel necessitee; for it forslaweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by recchelesnesse.

THE fourthe thyng is, that accidie is lyk to hem that been in the peyne of helle, bycause of hir slouthe and of hire hevynesse; for they that been dampned been so bounde, that they ne may

neither wel do ne wel thynke. Of accidie comth first, that a man is anoyed and combred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that God hath abhominacion of cometh slouthe, that wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne no penaunce. for soothly, Salomon, that he wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce, & therefore he shendeth al that he dooth. Agayns this roten herte synne of accidie and slouthe sholde men exercise himself to doon goode werkes, manly and vertuously cacchen corage wel to doon; thynkyng that oure Lord Jhesu Crist quiteth every good dede, be it never so lite. Usage of labour is a greet thyng; for it maketh, as seith Seint Bernard, the labourer to have stronge armes and harde synnes; and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne comth drede to bigynne to werke any goode werkes; for certes, he that is enclined to synne, hym thynketh it is so greet an emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevouse and so chargeant for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith Seint Gregorie.

OW comth wanhope, that is despayr of the mercy of God, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede; ymaginyng that he hath doon so muche synne, that it wol nat availlen hym, though he wolde repenten hym and forsake synne; thurgh which despayr or drede he abaundoneth al his herte to every maner synne, as seith Seint Augustin. Which dampnable synne, if that it continue unto his ende, it is cleped synnyng in the Hooly Goost. This horrible synne is so perilous, that he that is despayred, ther nys no felonye ne no synne that he douteth for to do; as shewed wel by Judas. Certes, above alle synnes thanne is this synne moost displeasnt to Crist and moost adversaunt. Soothly, he that despayreth hym is lyke the coward champion recreant, that seith Creaunt, withoute nede. Alas! alas! nedeles is he recreant, and nedeles despayred. Certes, the mercy of God is evere redy to every penitent, and is above alle his werkes. Alas! kan a man nat bithynke hym on the gospel of Seint Luc, xv, where as Crist seith: that As wel shal ther be joye in hevne upon a synful man that dooth penitence, as upon nynety and nyne rightful men that nevere ne dede synne, ne neder no penitence? Looke forther, in the same gospel, the joye and the feeste of the goode man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to

his fader. Kan they nat remembren hem eek, that, as seith Seint Luc xxiii. capitule, how that the thief that was hanged bi- syde Jhesu Crist seyde: Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest into thy regne. forsothe, seyde Crist: I seye to thee, to- day shaltow been with me in paradys. Certes, ther is noon so horrible synne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion & of the deeth of Crist. Alas! what nedeth man thanne to been despayred, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have. Thanne cometh sompnolence, that is, sloggy slombryng, which maketh a man be hevy and dul, in body and in soule. And this synne comth of slouthe. And certes, the tyme that, by wey of resoun, men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe; but if ther were cause resonable, for soothly, the morwetyde is moost covenable a man to seye his preyes, and for to thynken on God, and for to honoure God, and to yeven almesse to the poure, that first cometh in the name of Crist. Lo! what seith Salomon: Whoso wolde by the morwe awaken & seke me, he shal fynde. Thanne cometh negligence, or recchelesnesse, that neketh of nothyng. And how that igno- rance bemooder of alle harm, certes, negli- gence is the norice. Negligence ne dooth no fore, whan he shal doon a thyng, wheither he do it weel or baddely. Of the remedie of thise two synnes, as seith the wise man: that he that dredeth God, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon. And he that loveth God he wol doon diligence to plesse God by his werkes, and abaundone hym- self, with al his myght, wel for to doon. Thanne comth ydelnesse, that is the yate of alle harmes. An ydel man is lyk to a place that hath no walles; the develes may entre on every syde and sheten at hym at dis- covert, by temptacion on every syde. This ydelnesse is the thurrok of alle wikked and vileyns thoghtes, & of alle jangles, trufles, and of alle ordure. Certes, the hevne is yeven to hem that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith: that They ne been nat in the labour of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men, that is to seyn, in purgatorie. Certes, thanne semeth it, they shul be tormented with the devel in helle, but if they doon penitence.

THANNE comth the synne that men clepen Carditas, as whan a man is to laterede or taryng, er he wole turne to God; and certes, that is a greet folie. He is lyk to hym that falleth in the dyche, and wol nat arise. And this vice comth of a fals hope, that he thynketh that he shal lyve longe; but that hope faileth ful ofte.

THANNE comth lachesse; that is he that whan he biginneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it, and stynten; as doon they that han any wight to governe, and ne taken of hym namoore kepe, anon as they fynden any contrarie or anyanoy. Thise been the newes shepherdes, that leten hir sheep wityngly go renne to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. Of this comth povert & destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thynges. Thanne comth a manere cooldnesse, that freseth al the herte of a man. Thanne comth undevoicioun, thurgh which a man is so blent, as seith Seint Bernard, and hath swich langour in soule, that he may neither rede ne singe in hooly chirche, ne heere ne thynke of no devoicioun, ne travaille with his handes in no good werk, that it nys hym unsavory and al apalled. Thanne wexeth he slough and slombry, and soone wol be wrooth, and soone is enclined to hate and to envye. Thanne comth the synne of worldly sorwe, which as is cleped Tristicia, that sleeth man, as Seint Paul seith. for certes, swich sorwe werketh to the deeth of the soule and of the body also; for therof comth, that a man is anoyed of his owene lif. Wherefore swich sorwe shorteth ful ofte the lif of a man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kynde.

Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

Agayns this horrible synne of accidie, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called fortitudo, or strengthe; that is, an affectioun thurgh which a man de- spiseth anyouse thinges. This vertu is so myghty and so vigorous, that it dar with- stonde myghtily, & wisely kepen hymself fro perils that been wikked, & wrastle agayn the assautes of the devel. for it enhaunceth & enforceth the soule, right as accidie abat- eth it, and maketh it feble. for this forti- tudo may endure by long suffraunce the travailles that been covenable. This ver- tu hath manye speces; and the firste is cleped magnanimitie, that is to seyn, greet corage. for certes, ther bihoveth greet co- rage agayns accidie, lest that it ne swolwe the soule by the synne of sorwe, or des- troye it by wanhope. This vertu maketh folk to undertake harde thynges and gre- vouse thynges, by hir owene wil, wisely & resonably. And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man moore by queyntise and by sleighte than by strengthe, ther- fore men shal withstonden hym by wit & by resoun and by discrecioun. Thanne arn ther the vertues of feith and hope in God, and in his seintes, to acheve and ac-